

Ward 2 Planning Initiative:

Shaping the Future for Somerville's Southern Edge

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone

Maryann Heuston, Ward Two Alderman

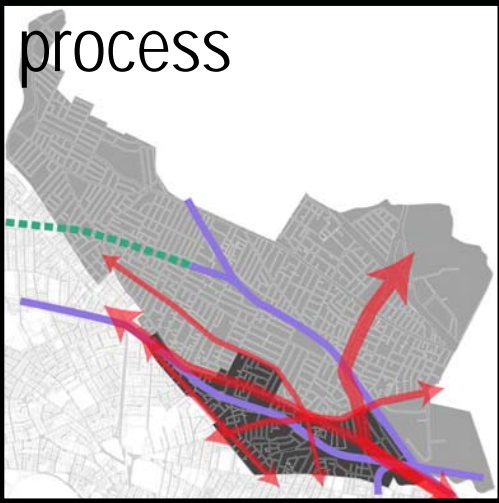
James Kostaras, AIA, AICP, Executive Director

City of Somerville

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development

14 September 2005

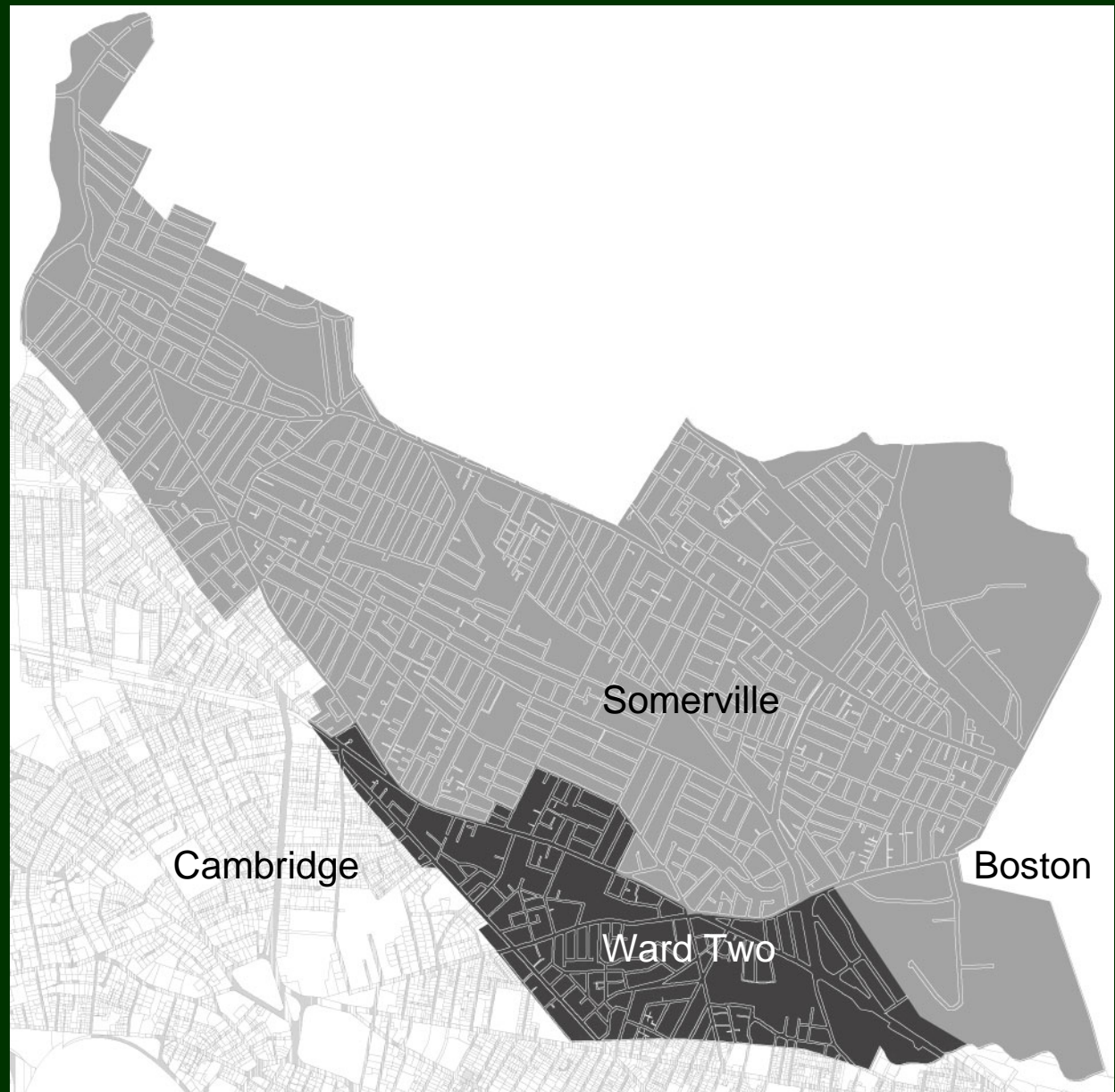
process



analysis

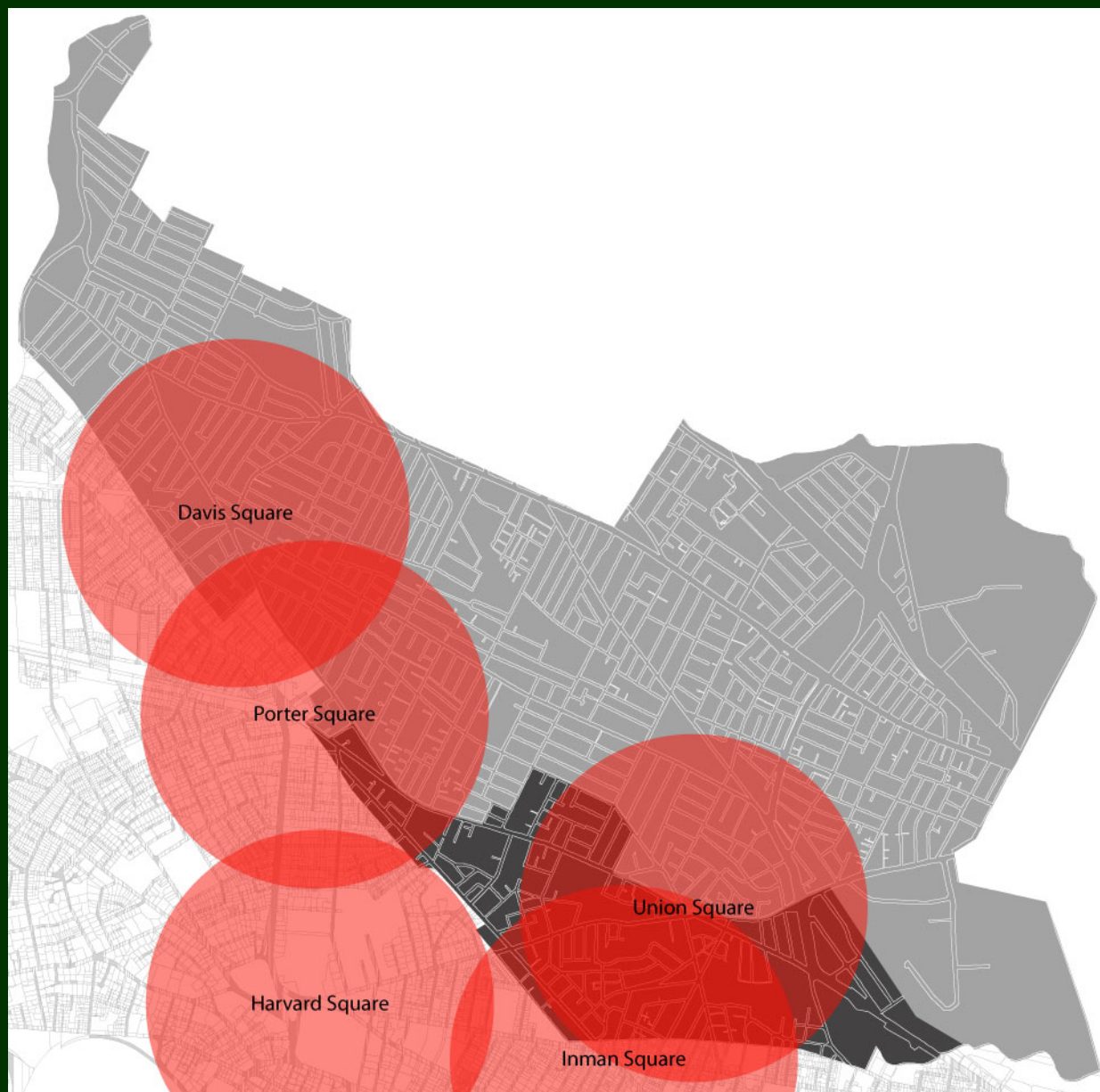
potential

Location



Location

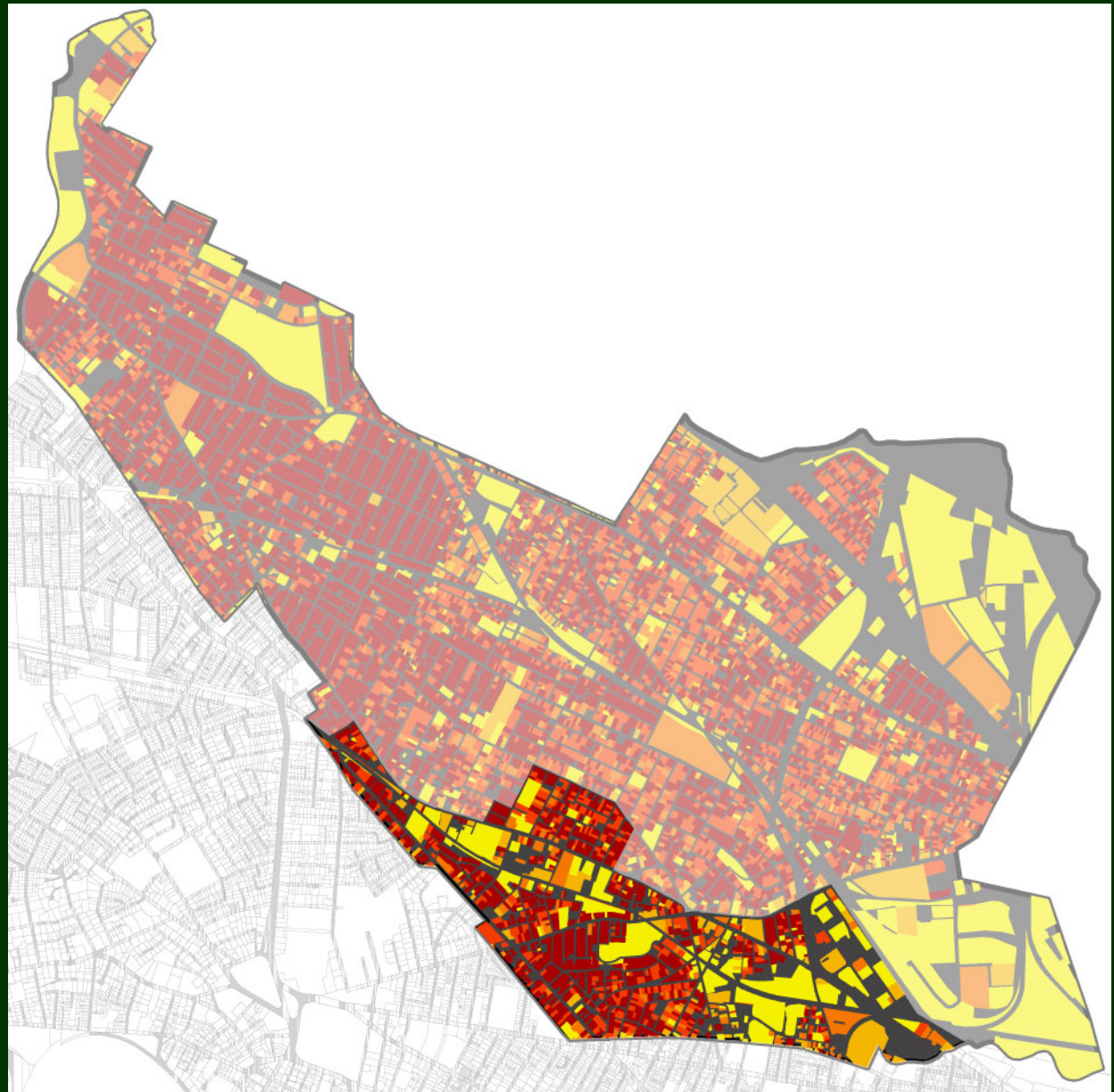
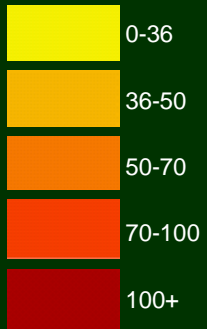
- Proximity to major squares in Somerville and Cambridge



10-minute walking radius

Total Assessed Value Per SF of Land

- Major parcels in Ward Two have low values



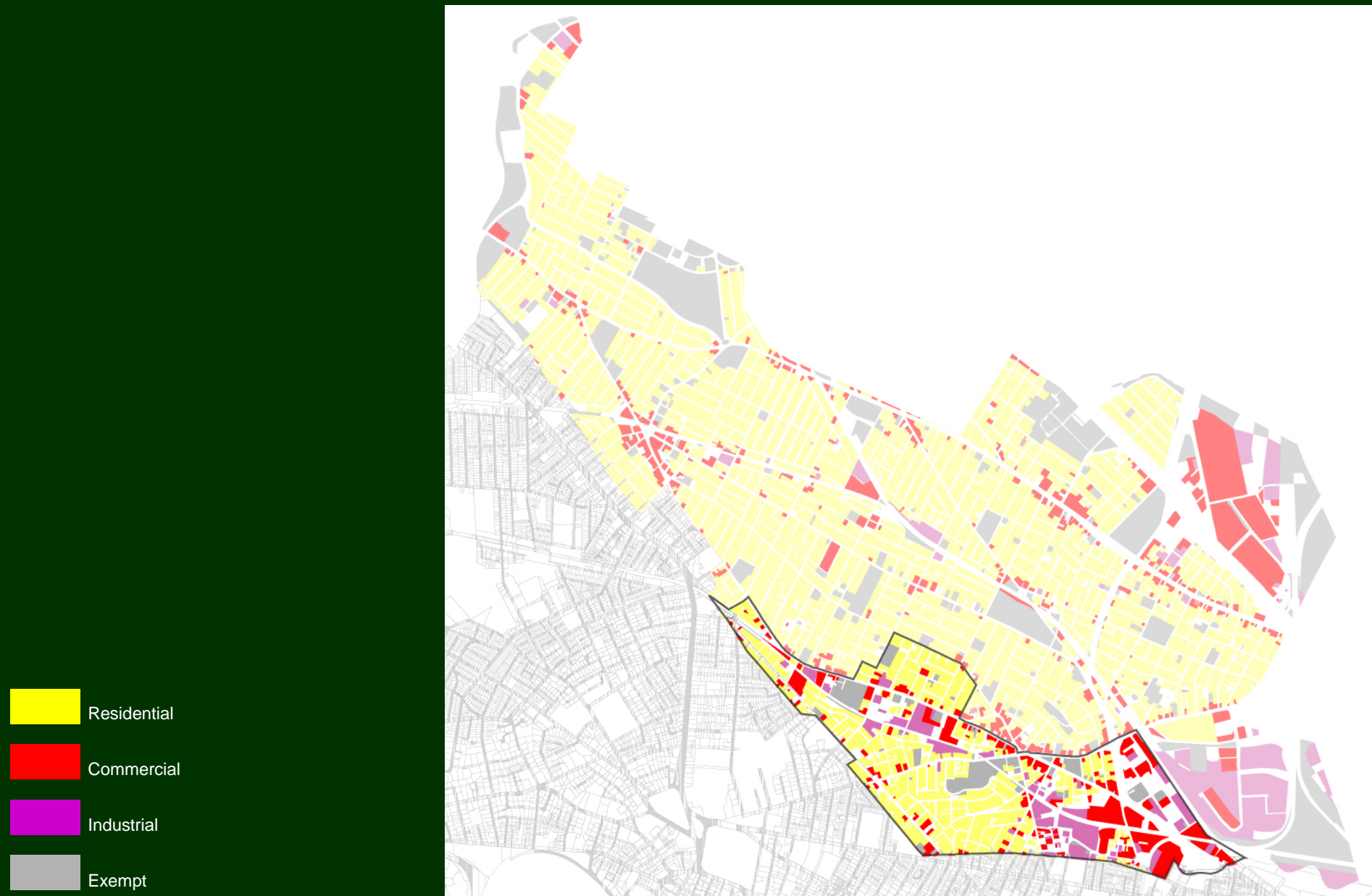
Total Assessed Value Per Square Foot

- Adjacent parcels have wildly varying values
- In comparison - \$124.32 value per SF in Davis CBD



Land Use

- Concentrations of industrial and commercial land



Infrastructure in Ward Two

- Major infrastructure moves through Ward Two



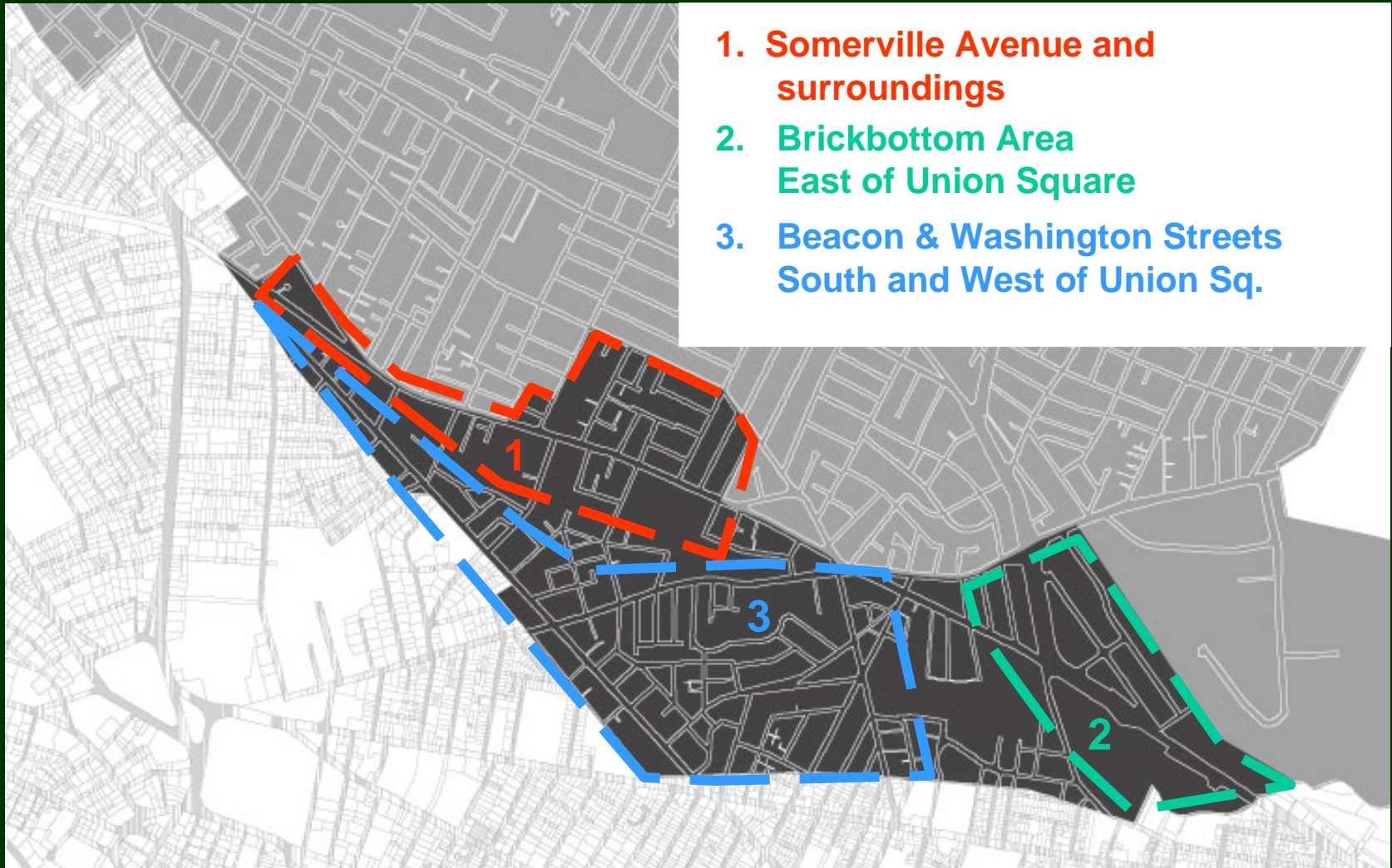
Planning Process

- Organized around the areas formed by infrastructure boundaries



Planning Process

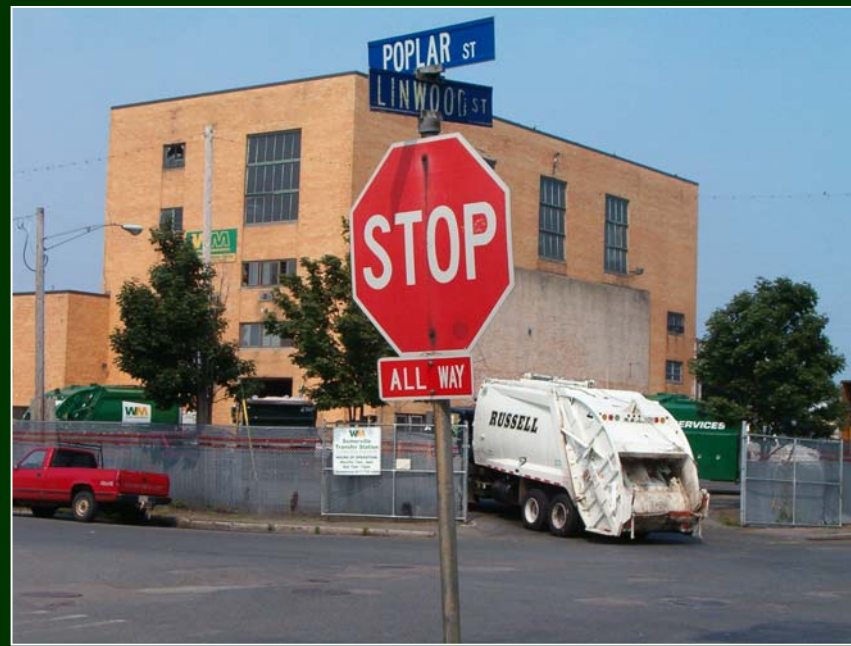
- Three areas of focus



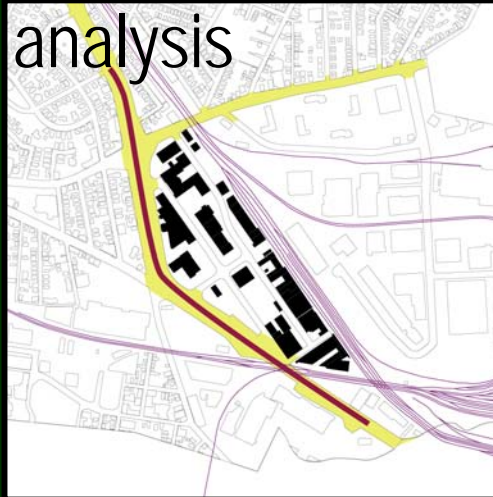
Brickbottom area – sight lines and view corridors



Neighborhood Images



process



- Access
- Zoning & Land Use
- Business Mix
- Studies

potential

Access

- Elevated highway and rail corridor act as barriers – isolating the Brickbottom area from surrounding neighborhoods and business districts



Existing Zoning

- Entire district is zoned industrial



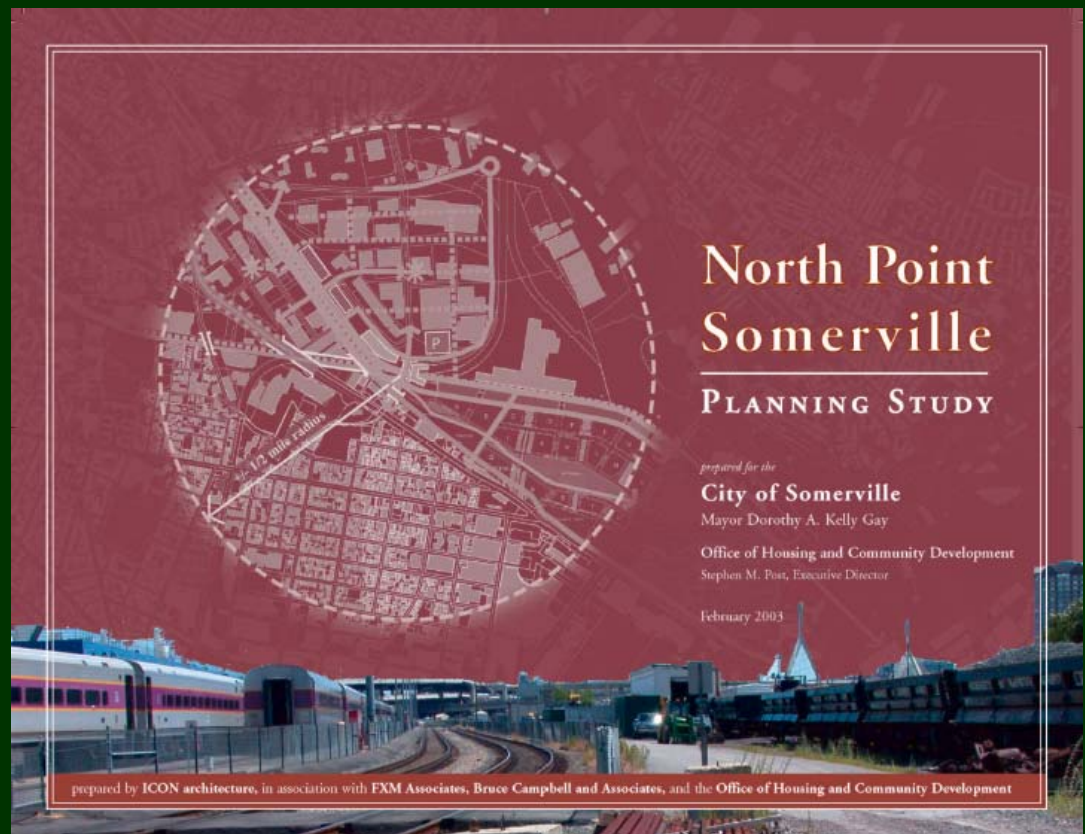
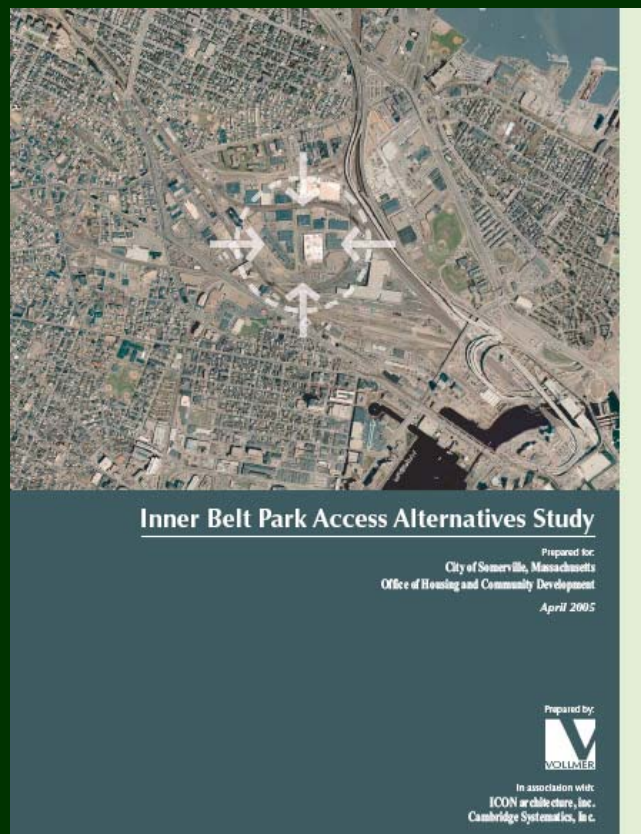
Existing Use Mix

- Uses are primarily auto-related and light industrial businesses
- Residential component: BrickBottom artists live/work space
 - 150 condominium spaces serve as home and workspace to both artists and non-artists



Recent studies of the area

- Inner Belt Access Study
- North Point Somerville Study
- Beyond Lechmere Northwest Corridor Study
- Route 28 Corridor Study (in draft form)



Inner Belt Access Study

- Alternatives to provide better access



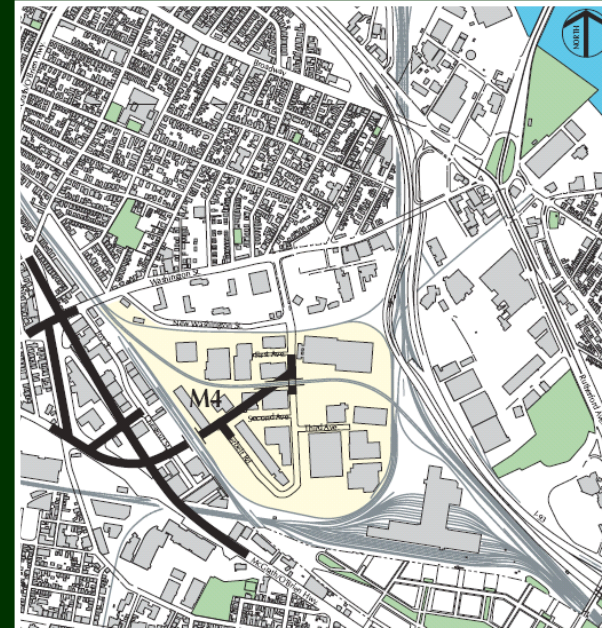
Option NW2

New Washington Street
realigned and extended –
overpasses required to
cross Lowell Line



Option M3

McGrath connector road
would bridge across the
Fitchburg line, crossing the
tracks at grade

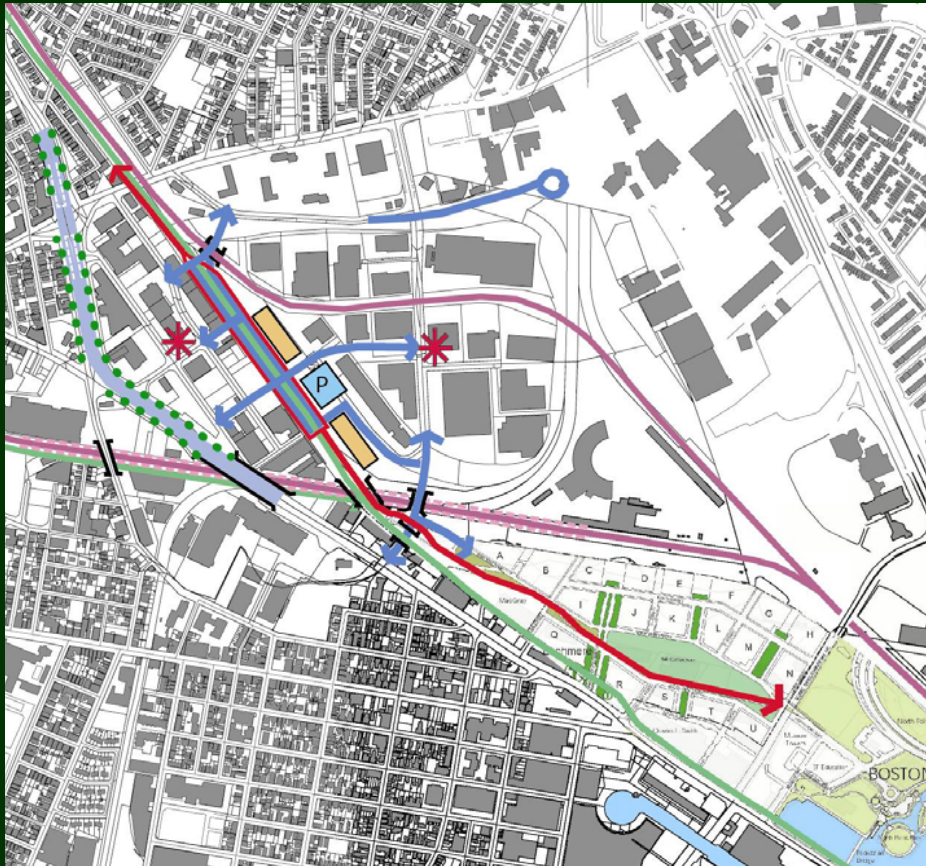


Option M4

McGrath as an at-grade
boulevard, realigned with
Somerville Ave to form an
intersection; Somerville Ave
extended into Inner Belt

North Point Somerville: McGrath Option

- Depress the Fitchburg Line



Urban Design Ideas Competition

- Study area will be centered on the Brickbottom area
- Competition kickoff slated for late 2005/early 2006

Student studio work

- Imagined a future for the area with McGrath Highway at-grade



process

analysis

potential

- Union Square
- Green Line Extension
- Industrial Clusters



Union Square Connection

- Strategies in motion
 - Union Square Main Streets
 - ArtsUnion – streetscape and zoning
 - Municipal Property Redevelopment
 - Farmer's Market
 - Windows Art Project
- Issues
 - Forming a relationship through infrastructure barriers
 - Pedestrian and vehicular connections are difficult despite physical proximity
- What's Next?
 - Infrastructure improvements in Union Square
 - Somerville Avenue reconstruction
 - Street furniture
 - Green Line extension



Existing Somerville Transit

- Only one transit stop – Davis Square



Proposed Green Line Extension

- Six stops in Somerville, including a station at Washington Street (and Brickbottom?)



Green Line Extension

- Strategies in motion
 - State process in motion to complete Environmental Impact Study (EIS)
 - Planned to be in operation in 2012
- Issues
 - Gentrification concerns
 - Displacement of residents/businesses
 - Station location
 - Infrastructure improvements
- What's Next?
 - Transit oriented development?
 - High density development?



Davis Square – Revitalization



Lechmere/North Point – Redevelopment

- 45+acre, \$2B mixed use development
- 2700 new housing units, 2.2M SF commercial

Continued Industrial Use

- In motion
 - Home to numerous auto-related and light industrial businesses and jobs
 - Large commercial tax base and job opportunities in the area
- Issues
 - Rising rents
 - Residential incursion
 - Difficulties with problematic abutting uses
 - Role of Arts and Creative Industries
- Future?
 - Relocation of Waste Transfer Station?
 - 86 Joy Street façade improvements
 - Possible zoning changes

